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SUBJECT: NORTH KIVU UPDATE: SAKE CALM, NEGOTIATION MISSION
FAILS TO REACH NKUNDA

REF: KINSHASA 1803 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) The North Kivu town of Sake remains calm November 30 according to MONUC military officials. Major Ajay Dalal of MONUC's North Kivu Brigade told us November 30 no fighting occurred in the past day and no movement of troops took place overnight. Sake was under control of MONUC and the integrated units of Congolese military (FARDC) the morning of November 30.

¶2. (U) A cease-fire agreement remains in limbo. A delegation of local officials -- the "Baraza la Wazee," an inter-ethnic regional council -- attempted November 29 to make contact with General Laurent Nkunda's representatives outside Sake to deliver the November 28 cease-fire proposal (reftel). The chief of the group reported to MONUC officials that elements of the non-integrated 81st and 83rd Brigades loyal to Nkunda, did not allow them past the town. He added that "locals" and some members of Congolese military's 14th Integrated Brigade, were "not in favor" of the talks and had also impeded their movements.

¶3. (SBU) A November 29 MONUC assessment mission reported Sake was generally deserted save for some residents returning to collect their belongings before heading back towards Goma. A USAID official in Goma reported November 30 that Sake was calm and that a steady stream of people were returning to their homes (septel). MONUC officials reported that Congolese military troops were occupying several houses and had looted many homes and businesses, but were unable to determine whether integrated or non-integrated troops were responsible for the looting. Congolese police remaining on duty in Sake reportedly did not intervene.

¶4. (SBU) Interior Minister Denis Kalume told MONUC's Radio Okapi November 29 that the GDRC will not resume paying those members of the non-integrated 81st and 83rd Brigades until they report to integration sites. Most members of the 81st and 83rd, including their top commanders, have previously refused direct orders to report for the brassage process. Congolese military officials in Kinshasa had as recently as November 23 issued another order directing the 81st and 83rd to head to the integration centers.

¶5. (U) MONUC reports that 151 soldiers from the 81st and 83rd died in the recent fighting; the number of those injured is unknown. Three soldiers from the 11th and 14th Integrated Brigades, as well as one civilian, were killed. Eighty-eight integrated FARDC troops and 21 civilians have been injured.
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